
FY 2020
SMALL NEPA PROJECT DESCRIPTION
Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests

Please **do not leave any field BLANK**.
Submit form (Word doc) electronically to jjchynoweth@usda.gov by **May 1, 2020**.

(NOTE: Italicized / red comments are for reference only. You may delete them after completing form.)

Project Name	Erikson Ridge Exploration Drilling
District Name (or "Forestwide")	Red River Ranger District
County where project located?	Idaho
FS Personnel Name, Phone Number and Email <i>If a partnership, please add name, phone and email; however, an FS employee MUST BE the project proponent and point of contact.</i>	Hayden Lewis (208) 935-4272 hayden.lewis@usda.gov
Legal Location	T30N , R8E, Sections 28, 29, 31, 32, and 33
Decision Maker's Name	Terry Nevius
Is the project associated with meeting a Forest target?	Minerals Plan Administration (T12)
Which CE Category does this project fit? <i>Provide citation: 36 CFR 220.6(e)(x)</i> <i>Categorical Exclusion categories can be found here:</i> <i>FSH1909.15 30 Amend-2018-1 CEs</i> <i>See below regarding 220.6(d)(x) projects.</i>	36 CFR 220.6(e)(8) Short-term (1 year or less) mineral, energy, or geophysical investigations and their incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of low standard road, or use and minor repair of existing roads.
NOTE: A Project Record and written Decision are not required for projects using a <u>36 CFR 220.6 (d) category</u>, except at the Decision Maker's discretion. <i>IF being submitted under <u>36 CFR 220.6 (d) category</u>, does the Decision Maker want a written Decision?</i>	

At what level does the Decision Maker want the project scoped?

Internal ____ External* x

Internal scoping will be through the Small NEPA IDT, unless otherwise specified. Scoping would be documented in the Extraordinary Circumstances Checklist.

External scoping will be with the public via a scoping letter, a legal notice, and the scoping letter posted on the NPCWNF website. The Project will only be scoped to the Tribe(s) et al (see block below) unless otherwise specified.

**For external scoping, please complete the next three blocks.*

Provide a list of the individuals, groups, agencies, etc. (other than those listed below*) with their mailing address and/or email address, of those who will be included for External Scoping.

- DO NOT provide only a name.
- DO NOT leave this box blank: If no additional individuals are to be externally scoped please enter NA.

Klepfer Mining Services, LLC
11891 N. Warren Street
Hayden, Idaho 83835



** The following will be included for all SN externally scoped projects: Nez Perce Tribe, Coeur d'Alene Tribe (North Zone projects only), Friends of the Clearwater, Idaho Conservation League, American Forest Resource Council, Idaho Wildlife Federation, IDFG – Clearwater Region, Thomas E. Peterson, Bill Mulligan, Gregg Winkler, Phil/Jean Poxleitner (Red River projects only)*

Does the Decision Maker want a Legal Notice published in the Lewiston Tribune? Yes x No ____

If yes, the scoping period starts the day after the LN is published.

If no, the scoping period will start ~4 days after the date the scoping letters are mailed.

The scoping period will be 14 days unless the Decision Maker wants to change it. 14 Days

What Level of Analysis (below) does the Decision Maker want for the Project?

 Low level: Choose this level if the project's level of public scrutiny is expected to be relatively low or unknown. Documentation for low level analysis projects would be a completed Extraordinary Circumstances checklist filled out by the specialists, including the name of the specialist who performed the analysis, the project name, and date it was completed. No other written documentation would be generated.

 x **Moderate level:** Choose this level if the project's level of public scrutiny is expected to be relatively moderate to high. In this case, specialists would complete the Extraordinary Circumstances checklist with the only write up being for resources that are present and the rationale for the effects call. No write up would be given for items in the checklist that are not present.

If the determination is no effect (which most CE's should have zero to very little adverse effects), then document *why* that determination was made in one paragraph or less. If the determination is an adverse effect, then *why* that determination was made would be written in less than three paragraphs.

List the Management Area(s) in which your project is located.

12B, 23B

What are the Management Area(s)' Goals and Standards* that are *relevant to your project*?

12b – Manage for timber production and other multiple uses on a sustained yield basis while improving the quality of deer and elk winter range. This management area consists of acreages of lands similar to those found in management areas 12 and 16. The heterogeneous spatial mix of these lands is the primary reason for identifying them as unique management areas.

23b – Manage to ensure that the Idaho Water Quality Standards for community public supply of water uses are met.

Mineral resource activities will be administered under the appropriate laws and regulations to ensure protection of surface resources while not unduly interfering with mining operations. Exploration and development of mineral resources will be facilitated by providing timely responses to Notices of Intent and Operating Plans. Emphasis will be put on working actively with operators to develop adequate operating plans and to obtain sufficient bonds to cover estimated reclamation needs. The frequency of inspections of ongoing operations will be commensurate with their size and complexity and will ensure adequacy of operating plans and identify unforeseen environmental impacts. Reclamation of disturbed areas to a productive condition will be required in all cases.

** Goals and Standards are described in Chapter 3 of the Nez Perce and Clearwater Forest Plans. Include any **relevant** Forestwide Standards found in Chapter 2 of the Forest Plans as well.*

Is the project in a designated Idaho Roadless Area (IRA)? No

Is the project in a congressionally designated area, ex. Wilderness Area, Wild & Scenic River Corridor, Research Natural Area, Historic Trail, etc.? No

Are there Floodplains or Wetlands in the project area? Yes

Are there Municipal Watersheds in the project area? Yes

If yes, which one? Elk City

Is the project located in an RHCA? Yes – partly

Describe the Existing Conditions of the project area.

The project area is located in upland terrain and has characteristics of a previously disturbed area. The project area has seen near a century long historical mining interest and logging activity.

Features within the project area include Little Elk Creek, Ericson Creek, and Lightning Fork which all feed into the municipal water supply of Elk City to the south of the project area. Within the vicinity of the creeks are various wetland veg. and other species.

Describe the Desired Conditions of the project area.

At the conclusion of the project drill pad sites and temporary roads will be ripped and reclaimed as close to original conditions as practicable through concurrent reclamation practices and applied mitigation measures.

What is the Purpose and Need for the proposed action?

The purpose of the project is to approve Gold Lion Resource's Plan Of Operations to explore for mineral resources on National Forest System lands in the area of the proposed action. In accordance with 36 CFR 228.5, the Forest Service is required to determine whether to approve the Plan, as proposed, or to require changes or additions to the Plan deemed necessary to minimize adverse environmental effects and to provide for reclamation of surface resources (36 CFR 228.8).

Describe the Proposed Action.

Gold Lion Resources of Henderson, Nevada proposes to conduct exploration drilling operations south of Orogrande, Idaho. The proposal is for a total of 62 drill sites, some near or above Riparian Habitat Conservation Areas (RCHA). The project area is located approximately 6.5 miles North-Northwest of Elk City and in the American River watershed.

Access to the project sites would primarily be on Forest Service Roads 283A, 646, and 9864B, with some sites being accessed using existing non-system roads. Brushing would be needed to open and maintain the non-system roads. An estimated 3,300 feet (12 feet wide) of temporary road needs to be constructed for access to some of the drill sites.

- Temporary roads would result in approximately one (1) acre of surface disturbance.
- Where necessary, drill pads will be offset from the existing road prism to provide for passage of motorized traffic.
- Travel on FSR and non-system roads would be limited during inclement weather so as to avoid resource damage.

Each drill site is approximately 30 feet x 50 feet in size, and may be slightly larger or smaller depending on slope and other conditions at a particular site. The number of holes drilled in each site will vary and will be dependent on results of ongoing drilling. The 4 inch holes would be drilled using, depending upon site access and equipment availability, either a truck/truck mounted or skid mounted core drill rig.

- Holes would be drilled to a maximum depth of 1500 feet, with drilling depths adjusted as targets and the deposit become more defined.
- Only one site would be active at a time but as drilling is nearing completion at a site, the next site could be prepared ahead of time to minimize the amount of time the drill rig sits idle.
- Total surface area of all drill pads/sites would be approximately 2.2 acres.

A sump or shallow pond, roughly 6 feet wide x 8 feet deep x 15 feet long, would be dug at each drill site to contain drilling fluids and to allow cuttings to settle out.

- The use of drilling additives is not anticipated but, if required, all drill additives will be biodegradable.

Drill cores would be analyzed offsite by contracted geologists to determine the size and extent of the deposit and thereby adjust the location and target depth of subsequent drill holes. The core results may preclude the need for drilling in all of the proposed 62 drill sites.

The project would require water withdrawal from nearby streams that feed into a municipal water source.

- A water use permit will be obtained from the Idaho Department of Water Resources.
- All water withdrawal sites will be reviewed by Forest Service specialists before water is taken from any stream.

Equipment used during operation includes but is not limited to two core drilling rigs, a water truck, pickup trucks, a tool/support truck containing fuel and lubricant's, ATVs, rubber-tired forklift, singular large diesel generator (power pack), and water pumps.

- Equipment not used in daily operations would be staged offsite near private property in the Elk City township.

The number of personnel associated with the project can fluctuate, but it is anticipated that a minimum of eight (8) persons will be needed to operate the two rigs. A geologist would be included in the crew to steer the drill.

- Corporate staff and consultants may visit the operation but are not expected to stay longer than a work day every other week.
- Project personnel intend to stay at Elk City motels but, on occasion, may use dispersed camping sites

List the Design Feature / Mitigation Measures * to be included with the Proposed Action.

1. Notify District Ranger or minerals administrator at least 48 hours before any work is to begin.
2. Wash all vehicles and equipment used at the site before being brought onto National Forest system lands to prevent the spread of noxious weeds, seeds or propagules.
3. Avoid disturbance of wetlands and stream riparian zones.
4. Avoid working on saturated soils. Exploration activities must cease to avoid sedimentation into intermittent streams if excessive storm water or ground water runoff is occurring.
5. Prevent discharge of water into any live stream or wetland. To avoid erosion and discharge impact to streams, all activities (including drilling, construction of pads, hand-dug sumps, and any overland travel) will be kept at least 164 feet (50 m) from flowing water that is down gradient.
6. Place weed free straw bales or install silt fence in places as identified by a Forest Service representative to minimize sediment migration from stockpiles and disturbed ground.
7. Obtain prior approval from the Forest Service for cutting or removal of trees or other large live vegetation. Downfall may be removed as needed.
8. Set aside cleared slash and green vegetation (e.g., bear grass) during test pit construction. Remove vegetation in clumps, if possible, with the soil mass intact. Store excavated topsoil and subsoil in separate stockpiles to be used during reclamation. Temporarily replant vegetation clumps in the topsoil stockpile.
9. Maintain only one (1) active pit or trench open at any one time. Reclamation may be occurring at one (1) other pit or trench concurrently.
10. To help alleviate the need for field crew to decide if fish are present in water withdrawal locations, a 1/8" screen will be installed on pump intake hoses even when utilizing a 5-gallon bucket with drilled holes. Water withdrawals will be located on small, high gradient streams as far up creek drainages as feasible to avoid habitat used by fish and sourced from streams under existing permits from the State of Idaho.
11. Collect process water in the constructed sumps. Regulate discharge to prevent overtopping the pit, and/or land apply excess water on a site designated by the Forest Service. Application sites will typically be natural sumps or depressions, pits or trap(s) that avoid impacts to wetlands or streams and minimizes impacts to other surface resources. Application rate will be such that overland flow is avoided and a natural infiltration occurs through forest duff.
12. Backfill and reclaim each test pit as soon as testing has been completed for that site.
13. Follow the State of Idaho Best Management Practices (BMPs) for all surface disturbing activities, reclamation, and abandonment. BMPs are outlined in the Best Management Practices for Mining in Idaho (Idaho BMPs) (Idaho Department of Lands, et al. 1992).
14. Report accidents or injuries to the Forest Service within 24 hours.
15. Develop and use a materials handling plan that includes a permit to the District Ranger prior to

Small NEPA IDT/resource specialists are listed below. Contact them if you have any questions regarding their resource for your project.

Botany – Mike Hays, mike.hays@usda.gov; 983-4028

Fisheries – Derrick Bawdon, derrick.bawdon@usda.gov; 963-4211

Heritage – Christy Mog, christy.mog@usda.gov; 935-4269

Hydrology – Cynthia Valle, cynthia.valle@usda.gov; 963-4203

Minerals – Marty Jones, martin.jones@usda.gov; 983-5158

Recreation – Carol Hennessey, cahennessey@usda.gov; 935-4270

Soils – Alex Rozin, alexandra.rozin@usda.gov; 842-2100

Wild and Scenic River – Chris Noyes, chris.noyes@usda.gov; 935-4251

Wildlife – Jim Lutes, james.r.lutes@usda.gov; 963-4202

Small NEPA Planner – Jeff Chynoweth, james.chynoweth@usda.gov; 935-4260

PROJECT MAPS

Please send – separate from this form and per the instructions outlined below – a GIS-generated map or maps of the project area (pdf format only) with the project submission email.

- Make sure that the map layers can be turned on / off / are editable.
- Make sure the map(s) fits on an 8.5 x 11 sheet of paper.

Provide at least one map, preferably “portrait” orientation, with the project area / features as:

- a Point, e.g. culvert, bridge, etc.,
- a Line, e.g. fence, road, creek, etc., and/or
- a Polygon, e.g. stand boundaries, treatment areas, etc.
 - Do not use a point if treating an area, use a polygon.
 - Points/lines/polygons need to be distinct and easily found on the map.
 - The project area / site needs to be centered on the map, especially if only one area/feature.

Please use the Forest Visitor Map as your map’s base layer.

- Do not add contour lines to the FV map unless needed for clarifying the proposed action. Contour lines can make the map difficult to read.
 - If contour lines are needed, make sure they are distinguishable from other linear features such as roads, trails, streams, etc.
- A topo map can be substituted for the FV map. If using a topo map but the contour lines are not important the topo lines should be light gray or opaque.
- Regardless of base map, make sure there are identifiable elements, e.g. towns, roads, streams, etc. on the map to help locate the project area on the landscape and that the elements are clearly labeled.

The preferred map scale (typically 1:24K) is whatever scale best presents the project area’s location and proposed activities:

- If the 1:24K scale is too small (i.e. the project feature(s) – point/line/polygon – would be hard to find or would be indistinguishable on just one map), use a larger scale to show the overall project area (coarse scale map) and smaller scaled maps to show the project features (fine scale map).
- If the 1:24K scale is too big (i.e. the project feature is a tiny point or thin line lost/hard to find on the larger landscape), use a smaller scale to highlight the feature while ensuring there are elements on the map to identify the project’s location.
- If you need to make additional maps, please make as few as possible.

At a minimum, all maps should include (with the preferred but not set in stone location on the map):

- a Title (project name and district name only (please); centered at top)
- a Legend (features clearly labeled; lower right corner)
- a Scale (in half mile, e.g. 0__0.25__0.5 miles, or full miles, e.g. 0__0.25__0.5__1.0 miles; lower left corner)
- a North Arrow (upper right corner)
 - Display all of the above in boxes with black outlines and a white backgrounds (not gray or yellow)
 - Do not ‘Halo’ the text or numbers or anything else on the map. Please.
 - The Scale needs to be large enough to read the numbers.

Finally, please include the mapmakers name and the date it was created on the map.

The Map(s) you provide will be used for Scoping the Public and the Tribes and in the Decision document. Please make sure they show – clearly, effectively, and professionally – what activity or activities are being proposed and where they are located on the Nez Perce - Clearwater National Forests.

SHAPEFILES

The resource specialists require the shapefile(s) of the project's proposed activities before they will conduct their analyses. Providing the shapefile does not substitute for providing a pdf map.

The Project Proponent needs to send the shapefile, or a location where the shapefile can be found, to the Small NEPA Planner (currently: jjchynoweth@usda.gov) by the time or shortly after the District Ranger submits this form.

- Shapefiles need to include the Project Name and have the Feature (culvert, bridge, etc.) labeled.
- Shapefiles need to include the following extensions – .dbf, .prj, .sbn, .shp, .shx, and .xml.

Projects in Roadless Area

What is the Inventoried Roadless Area name?	<u>Forest Plan IRA Name (if different):</u>
Identify the Idaho Roadless Management Classification: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Wild Land Recreation</i> • <i>Special Areas of Historic or Tribal Significance</i> • <i>Primitive</i> • <i>Backcountry Restoration</i> • <i>General Forest, Rangeland and Grassland</i> 	Classification(s):
Does the project involve constructing or reconstructing roads? Yes* No <i>* If yes, see http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2011-title36-vol2 then navigate to Subpart C 294.23</i>	
Does the project involve cutting trees? Yes* No <i>* If yes, see http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2011-title36-vol2 then navigate to Subpart C 294.24</i>	
Does the project involve removing minerals, including common variety minerals? Yes* No <i>* If yes, see http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2011-title36-vol2 then navigate to Subpart C 294.25</i>	

JC : 2/25/2020

Additional Information: